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## KINDERGARTEN OUTLINE FOR OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER.

ANNE ELIZABETH ALLEN.

THE content of the mind of a child of three years is apt to be a mass of heterogeneous images behind an "I want" column of indefinite length. This "I want" soon develops into "I want to know" or "Why?" and then the problems of the teacher as well as parent begin.

How much to answer and how much may be left to be found out by the child himself; how one may best make of himself an appendix merely for reference after the young knowledge seeker has exhausted his resources; and how to know what are "the best conditions for his growth"—are the questions open to us. Occasionally one or more of these questions is answered in individual cases, but they are always open questions, and the answers need constant revision.

True comradeship with children, constantly studying them as a companion in their many vagaries and from all sides, seems to be one of the best ways to understand and help them. The temptation in our present education seems to be to overstimulate them, and try to propose the question a mature mind naturally asks instead of waiting for the problem to formulate itself into a question in their minds; to overstimulate an already intensely active body and to force a moral condition that the teacher himself is only just beginning to comprehend.

At this keenly intellectual period little or no stimulation is required, and the teacher or parent need only direct. Questions come only too fast as all know who have been much with little children.

The "interests of children," about which so much has been written by the child students of the day, while embracing with all children many fundamental and universal things, especially in earliest childhood, are at the same time, in different localities

and among different classes and nationalities, of very varying quantity and quality.

As the child grows older, these interests take on a more local coloring and bear, in many instances, a strong resemblance to those of his parents and closest friends. The son of a street-car conductor, engineer, street cleaner, or bricklayer aspires to these several occupations usually as unquestionably as the daughter of a household seizes upon some or all of the home industries she sees her mother engaged in.

The mind of a little child flits from interest to interest, from whim to whim, fortunately for him; and do we not sometimes forget the more fundamental interests and in unguarded moments follow too closely the more evanescent whims? Again, do we not follow *ad nauseam* the fundamentals and leave out the real appeal to his spontaneity and check genuine expression?

Humor seems to have been sadly overlooked in our education. Jokes are reserved for mature minds, and in our language are so broad many times as to be dreaded. Fun of any kind has been so long tabooed from the sacred precincts of the temples of learning that a pedagogue fears its approach as he would that of some unconquered and unconquerable monster. Yet it is the essence, the spice of childhood. Were our children educated more in this direction, would not the humor of our language become more refined and acquire a *finesse* now rarely known? Neidlinger, in his *Songs for Little Children*, has touched the keynote of the nonsense that children love, and Andrew Lang, Frank Baum, and others have supplemented time-honored "Mother Goose" in a way that encourages us to hope for better things yet to come.

A good, hearty laugh is a tonic for a whole day, and nothing makes for better comradeship between old and young. We forget that the smile was rather a late development in art, and that the appreciation of humor denotes a high degree of civilization.

The decision as to what materials to put into the hands of kindergarten children has undergone many modifications since the modern psychologists have turned their attention to its con-

sideration. Froebel, in his marvelous insight into child nature, has left us a legacy beyond price. Yet more recent investigation has thrown new light upon some of his wonderful discoveries and modified his conclusions to meet the wisdom of this, the twentieth century. We are learning to make use of and modify his tools with all their possibilities and take them from the altars where blind worshipers of the letter have sought to elevate them. We are learning truly to follow the children in their real interests, although many times blindly and falteringly, and let us hope questioningly. There should be no abrupt change between the kindergarten and first grade any more than between any other two grades of the school. There should be no isolation. The kindergarten should be considered a regular grade of the school and treated as such. When this is done we shall lose much, let us hope, of the fetishism now existing in our kindergartens and study the children more and the material with which we work a little less.

In the fall the children come to us fresh from their summer outing, where their liberty has in most cases been unrestrained; hence they should be confined indoors very little. Those who have been in the country are prepared to question the miracle of change going on outdoors. We, with our two adjacent parks, have ample opportunity, weather permitting, for spending much of our time amidst the most delightful surroundings. During October we shall plan to stay in the parks at least one of the three hours each morning, playing the romping games the children know, gathering seeds and leaves, or watching the changes taking place in our garden or in the park.

The more curious among the children are apt to be attracted by the pebbles, leaves in their changing colors, grasses, wild flowers, seeds, etc.; and collections of these will be made, assorting according to color, form, or size, as the children decide. Free-hand cuttings, water-color sketches, or clay models of these may be made, as well as envelopes for collections. These collections will be carefully arranged and kept by the children and added to their collections at home. The seeds will be planted in their gardens in the spring and the trees identified by their leaves.

We shall watch the changes the frost makes and visit a farm, if possible bringing home seeds, fruits, leaves, etc. As the weather drives us indoors, we shall take up the home industries characteristic of the season, preserving fall fruits in different ways, drying, canning, preserving, and making jelly. This will be put away for our Thanksgiving feast, which we shall prepare for and serve to another class in the school.

Then will follow the preparation for cold weather in the warming of our houses, warmer bedding, and warmer clothing. We shall watch to see how much later the sun arrives in the mornings and how much earlier he retires at night. Note contrast between this and the conditions in the summer, how the cold affects the outside as well as indoor life.

December will be devoted almost entirely to the manufacture by the children of Christmas presents. The designs for these will be made, in many cases, by the children themselves from the objects collected, and they will be simplified so that they may need little or no help in making them. Cuts of such articles will appear in the Christmas number of this magazine.

The spirit of Christmas will pervade all our work, both the fun and joy of it as well as the beautiful in myth and story.

We shall dress a tree, making the ornaments and supplying the toys for some unfortunate family. If it be possible, the children will take the tree themselves to its destination. Contributions of food and clothing will be asked for those needing them both at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

*Materials used.*—Large blocks, clay, sand, paints and water color, paper, blackboard, and crayon, colored papers and paste, for illustration of outdoor scenes or stories.

*Music.*—Appropriate songs, selected from Smith's, Gaynor's, Neidlinger's, Hill's, and Elliot's songs for little children.

*Stories.*—“I'll Tell You How the Leaves Came Down,” Susan Coolidge; “Golden Rod and Aster,” “Philemon and Baucis;” “The Swan Maidens,” F. J. Cooke; “Which Was Happiest?” A. E. A.; “The Orphan Squirrels” and “The Broken Wing,” from the Norwegian; “St. Christopher,” “'Twas the Night before Christmas,” “Little Table, Dish Up!” “Three Bears,” “Seven Little Kids,” selections from *Little Folks Lyrics*, F. D. Sherman; “Wynkin, Blynkin and Nod,” Field.

*Rhythm.*—Simplest marching, skipping, and representative movements of the falling of leaves, flying of seeds, and blowing of the wind.

*Music.*—*Characteristic rhythms*, by C. L. Anderson, Parts I and II; “Invitation to the Dance,” Weber; “World’s Exposition March ;” etc.

*Games.*—Circle catcher, four circles, “Jacob and Rachel,” “Falling Leaves,” “Milkweed Babies,” tag, “Wind Horses.”